

02-277

From: Scott Carothers
To: Kathleen Abernathy
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:26 PM
Subject: <No Subject>

Ms. Abernathy,

I am greatly concerned that relaxing the rules on media ownership will decrease the diversity of viewpoints expressed by the media. Please do not side with corporate interests by voting to relaxing these rules. A robust democracy relies on a wide range of (often competing) views, and not on having ownership of media concentrated in the hands of a few. Please vote to maintain stricter ownership rules. Thank you.

Scott Carothers
Houston, Texas

SUNSHINE PERIOD

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JUN 16 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

SUNSHINE PERIOD

From: Kbn34b@aol.com
To: Mike Powell, Kathleen Abernathy, Michael Copps, KM KJMWEB, Commissioner Adelstein
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:29 PM
Subject: VOTE AGAINST DEREGULATION!!!

GREEN LIGHT FOR MERGERS COULD RESULT IN MEDIA GIANTS DOMINATING 100 LOCAL MARKETS

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JUN 16 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

GROUPS CHARGE FCC PROPOSAL GUTS PUBLIC INTEREST STANDARD

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Consumer Federation of America (CFA) and Consumers Union (CU) today warned that the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposal to relax media ownership rules will lead to dramatic consolidation of the two most important sources of news for as many as 70 million households. In a comprehensive critique, the groups argue that the FCC proposal effectively guts the public interest standard of the Communications Act and affords less protection for media mergers than the antitrust laws traditionally do for economic mergers.

"Unfortunately, the proposed rules circulated by the FCC are driven by political deals and deregulatory ideology, not rigorous analysis or First Amendment principles," said Gene Kimmelman, Senior Director for Public Policy at Consumers Union. "We do not think this is consistent with the Communications Act or the recent court decisions on ownership rules."

FCC Chairman Powell has argued that Federal Appeals court rulings that say that the current media ownership restrictions lack sufficient legal basis require a loosening of longstanding rules aimed at protecting the public from media concentration. CFA and CU dispute that assertion.

"The court just asked for rules based on sound analysis of empirical data. The draft order ignores audience size, actual patterns of media use and the dramatic difference between entertainment and the dissemination of news and information," said Mark Cooper, Director of Research at Consumer Federation of America and the principle author of the critique.

The CFA/CU analysis shows that mergers would be allowed in 140 concentrated local markets. In as many as 100 of these local markets, representing nearly half the national population, there is one dominant newspaper. Allowing a merger between a dominant newspaper and a large TV station would create a local news giant that threatens alternative news viewpoints. In these markets, one firm would have half of the total audience and employ half the total news employees.

"Such a news and information giant is a frightening prospect for democracy," stated Kimmelman. "Public policy should err in favor of more competition rather than less so communities can enjoy a greater diversity of viewpoints so critical to democratic dialogue and debate."

The report points out that the FCC's mistake in opening markets to cross-ownership mergers is not limited to small rural areas. One-paper cities include Atlanta, Louisville, New Orleans, and San Antonio. In these localities the media giant would have a 90 percent or larger share of the newspaper circulation and a merger would also typically secure one-third of the TV audience. No second entity could come close to matching this media power.

In typical two-newspaper markets (such as Buffalo, Las Vegas, Little Rock, and Richmond) the dominant paper still has, on average, five times the circulation of the number two paper. A merged firm would have four-fifths of the newspaper market, and one-third of the TV market.

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According to CFA and CU, the FCC proposal:

fails to properly define product markets by ignoring the fact that almost half of all broadcast stations do not provide news

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ignores the local market by counting stations and outlets that do little, if any local news

relies on an improper market structure analysis by failing to consider the audience (market shares) of the media outlets

sets a dangerously low standard for competition in local media markets-allowing the count of major news media voices to decline as low as three or four in many markets.

The report charges that the FCC's analysis is arbitrary and capricious as it applies logically inconsistent approaches across media markets. This inconsistent treatment biases the rules towards greater concentration and less diversity. It appears to be driven by a results-oriented political agenda rather than sound analysis. For example:

UHF stations appear to be discounted for the purposes of the national cap on network ownership of local stations, but not for purposes of the cross-ownership and the duopoly rule.

The FCC recognizes the importance of major TV voices by banning duopoly mergers between two TV stations ranked in the top four in any market. However the FCC does not recognize the importance of newspapers for broadcast newspaper cross-ownership. It fails to impose a similar restriction on a top four TV station combining with a newspaper.

CFA and CU contend that a responsible approach, consistent with the record in this proceeding, would produce a set of rules based on a rigorous analysis of the current media market structure and would adopt a high public interest standard. They propose that:

no mergers between TV stations and newspapers should be allowed if the overall media market in a locality is or would become concentrated because of the merger.

no mergers involving TV stations should be allowed if the TV market in a locality is or would become highly concentrated because of the merger.

This approach would allow cross-ownership mergers in ten of the largest markets.

An Executive Summary and full text of the report can be found at:

<http://www.consumerfed.org/FCCcritique.05.21.03.pdf> The Consumer Federation of America is the nation's largest consumer advocacy group, composed of two hundred and eighty state and local affiliates representing consumer, senior, citizen, low-income, labor, farm, public power and cooperative organizations, with more than fifty million individual members. CFA is online at www.consumerfed.org.

Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports, is an independent, nonprofit testing and information organization serving only consumers. CU is comprehensive source for unbiased advice about products and services, personal finance, health and nutrition, and other consumer concerns. Since 1936, CU's mission has been to test products, inform the public, and protect consumers. CU's income is derived solely from the sale of Consumer Reports and its other services, and from noncommercial contributions, grants, and fees. CU is online at www.consumersunion.org.

Sincerely,

William Yazbec
Tallahassee, FL

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JUN 16 2003

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

From: Lance Akins - Austin.rr
To: Mike Powell, Kathleen Abernathy, Michael Copps, KM KJMWEB, Commissioner
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:29 PM
Subject: Concerning Media Ownership Rules

Dear FCC Commissioners,

I understand the FCC will potentially be rewriting and relaxing the rules governing media ownership. As a common American, I cannot fathom how this act hopes to improve America. Our freedoms of speech and press have time after time been shown to be some of the most powerful tools to preserve this country's openness. That openness is at the core of our success, saying to all who come here that they may have their voice heard. It is the diversity of our voices that helps to highlight new, and sometimes unpopular, ideas that have continually moved this country forward, while other nations have lagged behind, unable to find the mechanism for necessary change. Change is painful for those in established positions, and now the FCC is proposing to give more power, more influence, more ownership of the tools which disperse the news and information we consume to the corporate media giants. This will only further solidify those media giants' complacency with the status quo, and will accelerate the pace of corporate reporting that is more solely based on the business of generating customers and less and less based on reporting those stories that are the most controversial and often the most important and impacting to the American people.

The only advantage I can see in the view of relaxing media ownership rules is the lining of heavily lobbied pockets, and I deserve better from my government. I deserve better from you who make these decisions. This is not a corporate game, and their greed should not be capable of buying your votes. I desperately hope that one of the three of you will reconsider your predicted decision, and conduct the business of the American people with us at the front of your mind.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lance Akins
lakins@austin.rr.com
Ph: 512-912-7642

SUNSHINE PERIOD

From: Victor Evjen
To: Mike Powell
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:30 PM
Subject: Upcoming Ruling on Rules Restrictions for Media Outlets

Mr. Powell,

I'm a simple taxpayer worried about my sources of news. I paid the federal government over \$20,000 in income tax, not including Social Security and Medicare and I want some real choices from my tax dollars and MY broadcast spectrum. If this sort of corporate greed continues, I may just take my skills and not come to play anymore for the federal tax roles.

I see that the perspective of the Bush Administration has been to limit knowledge of the facts and going so far as to fabricate intelligence for the Iraq war. The total elimination of rules that prevent mega media outlets fits in line with the administrations efforts to control public opinion through manipulation of the media. With fewer media outlets it is that much easier for any administration or corporation to control public opinion. I am not in favor of any further relaxation and in total truth I am in favor of more restriction on media outlets.

The internet has not opened up more channels for opinion as the media conglomerates claim, for example, just this morning I read the SAME article in three different sources, FoxSports.com, www.wdiv.com, and www.detnews.com. I was looking for the rationale behind the firing of the Detroit Pistons head coach Rick Carlisle and I had the same AP article passed off as news! What a farce. The limitations on media outlets need to be in place and strengthened.

I am tired of the increase in cross promotional advertising on AM & FM broadcasts; there are far too few free choices available in genre on the radio. Clear Channel now not only owns the audio broadcasts for artists, but also is a major promoter of concerts for live appearances. It won't be long before artists such as the Dixie Chicks won't get booked or played on the radio for their political stances. It is one thing for me as a consumer to turn off what I don't like, but it is something totally different for Clear Channel stations to make that choice for me!

I need real variety... Not some veil of variety perpetrated by the man!

Victor C. Evjen
4550 Curtis Road
Highland, MI 48357
(248) 889-9280

CC: Kathleen Abernathy, Michael Copps, KM KJMWEB, Commissioner Adelstein

From: junkmail@bendcable.com
To: Mike Powell
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:30 PM
Subject: FCC Rule Change

SUNSHINE PERIOD

FCC Commissioners:

As you know there are millions of people concerned with the idea of changing FCC rules. In addition we are concerned with the very lack of interest in listening to these concerns. I can only hope that the commission has not lost faith in democracy. At the very least this great nation should have a slow, thorough debate regarding such a critical issue. This commission is appearing afraid of this process, and that is of serious concern to me. Your responsibility is to protect the vast perspectives of the peoples and you are doing the opposite. Mr. Powell you do not appear to care about the very people you have taken as a responsibility to protect. You are displaying your lack of potential to fulfill this position.

DO NOT FOLLOW THROUGH WITH ANY MEETING ON JUNE 2ND REGARDING CHANGES TO THE FCC RULES NOW IN PLACE.

I will be following this issue closely and oppose your methods, and your plans regarding this issue. We must protect democracy together and not erode the foundation that this great nation was built on. Do not take this lightly, or you risk being the hammer striking foundation. Signed, Concerned!

From: David Balts
To: Kathleen Abernathy
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:32 PM
Subject: FCC Deregulation

SUNSHINE PERIOD

Dear Kathleen,

After hearing about the upcoming changes to ownership rules for television stations I feel compelled to write, although I'm not sure what good it'll do. As I understand the FCC Chairman has already decided that further deregulation is needed and are pushing to have a vote very soon without additional time to notify the public, whom you're supposed to serve, and collect adequate responses.

What is about to happen is the same thing that has killed local radio. Years ago radio was deregulated and now an overwhelming majority of the radio stations in the country are all controlled by a very small group of owners, with profit as their primary goal. This is not good. It has done nothing but hurt the American public.

In the past there were local pillars in each and every community that owned and operated each station locally and independently. Each tried to out serve the other with local programming. If someone served your audience better than you did, you lost your audience. That meant either you dug in and learned to serve your audience better, or you had to try something else to find an audience. This was decided by the audience and each community had many local sources to turn to.

As it stands now, in almost every community, you have only a few corporate groups that continue to gather more and more stations under one umbrella. Of course they don't want to compete with each other, so they're each given a format and audience to serve, eliminating competition. The only competition left is if you have two corporation groups competing, with each having one station in each format. Then maybe you get some kind of competition. But it still won't be 'local' competition because most decisions nowadays are made from corporate offices many many miles away. One decision for literally thousands of stations. How can this possibly be good for America?

Radio station groups are also running several stations with barely over one staff. Many times you hear the same people on many supposedly different stations in the same market. I should know. I was one of those radio managers swallowed up by consolidation and I helped fold station after station into our radio group dismissing most employees from each station added, because it was no longer 'one staff for one station' as it had been for so long. Most situations ended up with many facilities operating on bare bones staffs or with no operator on duty almost all the time. This current situation makes it impossible to get to know your audience and operate your station to best serve them what they want and need, and says nothing about trying to handle local emergencies. These things are an afterthought at best.

It used to be that station owners loved being pillars of the community. Standing tall serving their community to the best of their ability and they were proud of it. They were happy just to make enough money to pay the bills, pay the employees, and invest in the community. Now all each facility has become is a total in a ledger at some corporate office somewhere, where the first and only thing that matters is

profit. It doesn't matter if the station was serving a unique audience if another direction could increase profits. In the past the community knew who controlled the local station and could support them or turn away from them depending on how they felt served. And you could easily visit with a local owner and give them your feedback and hear their responses, but not anymore. Chances are you won't even find anyone with total authority at the local stations, and you're certainly not going to influence anyone at the big city corporate offices from the small town your local station is supposedly serving.

These corporations say they need to combine to cover operation costs. This is not true. All it is for is to maximize profits. Bottom line.

Having companies like Clear Channel owning and directing 40 radio stations across the country as they used to do was bad enough, but with them now influencing over 1100 stations makes it a travesty. And they've even admitted that they're not here to serve news and information or even music. Their only goal is to sell their customers products, which is advertising; thus maximizing profits.

Whatever happened to the airwaves being owned by the public? To be used by 'trusties' to serve their local communities, and if they didn't, the FCC would let someone else try who could do it better. With things this way the public was always number one. Now it's like the public has totally been forgotten.

I hope that you would rethink what you are about to do to television. I would also hope that someday you'll wake up regarding radio and give the airwaves back to the people. Having a couple major groups controlling all stations, from a corporate office many miles away, certainly does nothing to serve the diverse, different, local communities.

Please don't put corporate greed ahead of the American public. Give the people back 'their' airwaves.

Thank-You.

David

David Balts

La Crosse, Wisconsin

dbalts@centurytel.net

SUNSHINE PERIOD

From: Pat Pratt
To: Mike Powell, Kathleen Abernathy, Michael Copps, jdelste@fcc.gov
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:33 PM
Subject: fcc change of rules re: ownership of media

Dear Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission:

I am writing to you in opposition to your proposal to allow extended multiple ownership of media. Our country needs a variety of voices able to be heard, not a small collection of radio and TV stations and newspapers all serving up their limited versions of the news. Please continue access to media with a variety of ownerships and viewpoints.

Sincerely yours,
Patricia M. Pratt

From: george riley
To: Mike Powell, Kathleen Abernathy, Michael Copps, KM KJMWEB, Commissioner Adelstein
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:34 PM
Subject: Don't expand ownership rules

Do not, PLEASE do not, open up the ownership rules on the media. Too much concentration already exists. There are other issues. Our public airways should be generating revenue for the federal government, not be gifts to industry. There ought to be less costly political candidate access. There needs to be more opportunity to hear different viewpoints. There needs to be more competition, not less. The one thing we do not need is more media concentration. Don't let FOX and Clear Channel run away with our democracy. George and Judy Riley, 1198 castro rd, Monterey, ca, 93940

Protect your PC - Click here for McAfee.com VirusScan Online

From: PaulSMoser@aol.com
To: Kathleen Abernathy
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:35 PM
Subject: Proposed new rules

Dear Ms. Abernathy--

I am writing to express my distress at what appears to be the blithe acceptance by the FCC of further media consolidation in this country. I cannot understand where the FCC's guardianship of the public interest in this area is coming into play. It appears very much as if Westinghouse, AOL Time-Warner, Disney and the rest are exerting pressure and having their way with all of us. It is not a pretty picture. And I do not accept the idea that their "freedom of speech" is at issue here; the truth is that the public welfare (part of the bedrock of which is a healthy, diverse media community) must take precedence over the rights of individual companies which stand to have undue influence on the lives of all citizens. Perhaps you do not see it this way, but it appears to me that one of the most important roles of government and its agencies (especially yours) is to encourage healthy public discourse. It is what distinguishes us from dictatorships. This proposed change may not be as dramatic as our transformation to dictatorship, but the whiff of Big Brother is in our nostrils, even if the effects are just mild anesthesia. These groups will sell us their cola, their video games, and ultimately their take on the world. And it is your job to see that these effects are not exaggerated. I would hope you are equal to the task.

Sincerely,
Paul Moser
Angwin, CA

CC: KM KJMWEB

From: Gary Himler
To: Kathleen Abernathy
Date: Sat, May 31, 2003 3:48 PM
Subject: Proposed FCC Vote

We vehemently object to the proposed changes in media ownership rules, and urge that these changes be voted down. The current 35% restriction of US households allotted to TV stations, and the current restrictions against one company owning combinations of TV, newspaper, and radio stations in the same market ,safeguards against the potential of a few media conglomerates influencing /controlling public information. Please vote NO on your proposed changes for the industry, and YES, therefore, for the rights of us...the citizens.

Thank you.

Babette and Gary Himler

From: cohend@fiu.edu
To: Kathleen Abernathy
Date: Tue, Jun 3, 2003 9:16 PM
Subject: Please Act to Stop Media Monopolies

Senator John McCain
U.S. Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain,

Dear Senator McCain:

I urge you to tell the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) not to weaken the rules that help preserve competition and diversity among the owners of America's newspapers and radio and TV stations. You're one of the only Republicans in Congress that can be counted on to serve the interests of decent, ordinary, working Americans--and I urge you to fight for us again on this issue as well.

Also, since the Bush/Ken Lay/Tom DeLay wing of the Republican Party has long since betrayed the true Republican values of Abe Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt, why not consider joining your good friend and fellow Vietnam vet John Kerry in the party of true pro-equality, pro-consumer, pro-environment Republicanism: the Democrats! How many times will the Rove Republicans have to smear you personally, and even members of your family (as they did in 2000 in South Carolina), before you join your true allies in the moderate wing of the Democratic party? But I digress.

As you know, the FCC is reviewing rules currently for media ownership and is likely to allow big corporations to dominate ownership of media in a particular city or town. If that happens, one company may be allowed to own the local newspaper, several TV and radio stations and the cable TV system in the same community. There would be fewer owners of networks, stations and newspapers nationwide.

Media ownership would be concentrated among fewer companies and the public's ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints would be compromised. Plus, it likely would result in higher costs for businesses that advertise in local media, and those costs likely would be passed onto consumers.

The FCC is expected to vote on whether to change the rules on June 2. The public comments submitted to the FCC by individuals have been opposed to media consolidation overwhelmingly. Americans understand that the public interest is not being served by deregulation that reduces

competition.

Please tell the FCC to reinstate its traditional media ownership rules for the sake of competition and democracy.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Daniel A. Cohen 19 Pinecrest Drive Westborough, Massachusetts
01581

Sincerely,

Daniel Cohen
19 Pinecrest Drive
Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

cc:

Senator Edward Kennedy
Senator John Kerry
Senator Ernest Hollings
Representative James McGovern
FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell
FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps
FCC Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
FCC Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein

From: Rmbsjb@aol.com
To: Kathleen Abernathy
Date: Tue, Jun 3, 2003 9:16 PM
Subject: Please Act to Stop Media Monopolies

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Washington, DC 20510

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robert Byrnes
1578 Columbia St.
Loretto, Pennsylvania 15940

cc:

Senator Arlen Specter
Senator Rick Santorum
Senator Ernest Hollings
FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell
FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps
FCC Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
FCC Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein

From: cohend@fiu.edu
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Daniel A. Cohen 19 Pinecrest Drive Westborough, Massachusetts
01581

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Daniel Cohen
19 Pinecrest Drive
Westborough, Massachusetts 01581

cc:

Senator Edward Kennedy
Senator John Kerry
Senator Ernest Hollings
Representative James McGovern
FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell
FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
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Loretto, Pennsylvania 15940

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Senator Rick Santorum
Senator Ernest Hollings
FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell
FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps
FCC Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
FCC Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein

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To: Commissioner Adelstein
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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jerome Delaportas
22 Pine Tree Drive
Farmingdale, New York 11735

cc:

Representative Peter King
Senator Ernest Hollings
Senator Hillary Clinton
Senator Charles Schumer
FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell
FCC Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
FCC Commissioner Michael J. Copps
FCC Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
FCC Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein

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To: Commissioner Adelstein
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Sincerely,

Napi Nanette Ippolito
611 China Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220-6216

cc: